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| What Makes a Good Web Page?    As the number of people with access to the World Wide Web continues to increase exponentially, the number of personal Home Pages is exploding as well. I'm particularly intrigued by what sorts of material people choose to put on their Home Pages, and how they present it.  Personal Home Pages are much more like the clichéd box of chocolates. As with the desktop publishing revolution, individuals suddenly have access to powerful tools for the mass dissemination of information; the kind of tools that previously were only available to experts and specialists. The result, in both cases, has been some wonderfully valuable and creative work -- and a whole lot of pure wreck.  So the question arises -- what are the qualities that make a good Home Page? At the technical level, there are several HTML style guides that discuss proper syntax, and how to make sure a page displays properly. My interest is at a more abstract level. I've been spending a good deal of time in recent weeks surfing the Web looking for outstanding personal Home Pages. Here are some thoughts on what characterizes the best Home Pages, and what to avoid.    **A Home page should be more than just a Hotlist.** Far too many pages are simply "my cool links" and nothing else of consequence. Comprehensive Web directories out there such as Yahoo and the several excellent Web search engines are generally much better for this than any one person's page. And what's the point of going to a person's individual page if all you see is a terse listing of the places on the Web that person has surfed recently? I don't mean to say that you shouldn't put hotlists or links in your personal pages. The point is that what makes a Home Page truly distinctive is the material *on that page*, not the other pages it links to. Of the pages that do feature lists of links prominently, the best are the ones that add some value by providing helpful descriptions or grouping sites in some intelligent way.  **Layout and Design**. Good pages don't overuse inline images for their own sake, and have a consistent layout and organization. The more extensive the page or pages, the more important it is to have navigational aids like "what's new" pages and tables of contents. Also, don't go overboard with slow-loading graphics, and optimize the graphics you do use by making them smaller and using fewer colors.  **Original Content**. This overlaps to some extent with the first point, but is worth elaborating. One of the main things that makes a Home Page good is that it is unique. Given the vastness of the Net, what makes pages unique is generally the personal material that the author brings to the table.  **Depth**. The best Home Page always gives you a sense that there is something beneath the surface, and that exploration will be rewarded with new discoveries. This doesn't necessarily mean dozens of different pages; it's a matter of using hypertext in an intelligent way to expand the impact of the material you do have.  **Creativity**. The HTML markup language gives everyone creating Web pages the same set of basic tools. Good Home Pages combine those tools in new and innovative ways, and give Web surfers a reason to check them out rather than some other, similar pages. The Web gives you an opportunity to have your work viewed by literally thousands, or even millions of other people around the world -- make the most of it!  **Personality**. Your home page is your window on the Internet. It should give people viewing it a sense of who you are. This can mean the obvious, like biographical information, or more subtle forms of content that demonstrate your interests and outlook on life. Don't feel that you have to do the same thing some other "cool" page did; make your home page YOURS.    [Copyright](http://werbach.com/copyright.html) © 1995-2003 by Kevin Werbach. Last updated January 15, 1996 |  |